

July 31, 2007

**Statement of Rep. Pete Stark
In Support of the Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2007**

MR. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of pay equity.

The rationale for the Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2007 should be obvious. All people, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, and religious or sexual orientation, should receive equal pay for equal work.

Unfortunately, that is not the case today in America. African-Americans make only 77 cents for every dollar made by men, black families make about 60 cents of every dollar made by whites, and gays, lesbians and other minorities regularly face discrimination in the workplace.

The Supreme Court's recent decision makes it incredibly difficult for employees to challenge acts of discrimination. The decision limits to six months the period in which victims can challenge their employers and be compensated for discrimination.

Such a time limit was insufficient for Lily Ledbetter, whose pay slowly slipped in comparison to the pay of her male coworkers over a period of nineteen years. It would also be insufficient for millions of other workers, who often learn of pay discrimination only after the fact. The majority of companies do not release information on comparable salaries, making it difficult if not impossible for employees to determine if wage discrimination is taking place.

In a typically shortsighted move, Bush has threatened to veto this bill on the grounds of preventing frivolous lawsuits. The word "frivolous" can be used to describe many things, but it most certainly cannot be used to describe a bill that brings the people of this country a step closer to the equality that they deserve. For someone who claims he wants to spread the principles of equality and democracy to the people of the Middle East, it is unfathomable that he

would fail to uphold these ideals for the people of this country.

As representatives of a country that was founded on the idea of equality for all, there is no excuse for denying citizens the opportunity to contest acts of discrimination. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.